



Planned Parenthood California Central Coast



Planned Parenthood Central Coast Action Fund

May 11, 2021

Dear Members of the Oxnard Union High School District Board,

As you are aware, the California Healthy Youth Act (CHYA) requires that comprehensive and inclusive sexual health education be provided to students at least once in middle school and once in high school. As the most trusted provider of reproductive health care, Planned Parenthood offers programming that aligns with this law and ensures best practices in comprehensive sexual education. We urge you to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Planned Parenthood California Central Coast (PPCCC) and Oxnard Union High School District (OUHSD) in order to demonstrate that the Oxnard community supports high-quality sex education and to provide teachers with additional support and resources to provide the highest quality sex education to high school students in the district.

Young people deserve age-appropriate, medically accurate information and answers to their sex and relationship questions without being shamed or judged. Access to comprehensive sex education can help youth foster healthy relationships and make informed, thoughtful decisions. We know these topics can sometimes feel awkward and that teachers are at capacity; that's why Planned Parenthood is here to help. We agree that sex education is best delivered by teachers. This MOU would provide trained health educators to present educational sessions on sexual and reproductive health topics. It would allow PPCCC to serve as a resource to teachers in complying with all provisions of the CHYA by providing teacher support, training, and informational resources as needed.

PPCCC educators have extensive training and experience on these complex topics. Planned Parenthood is the single largest provider of sex education in the United States, reaching 1.5 million people with education and outreach every year. The reasons to implement medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education are clear:

- Youth want and deserve a high-quality, inclusive, medically accurate sex education so that they can make healthy decisions.
- Sex education promotes honest dialogue about love, relationships, and sex. It improves community health and well-being.
- Local rates of chlamydia, syphilis, and gonorrhea are at record highs. Data shows that young people are most at risk: over 50% of infections are in youth age 15-24. Our young people deserve information about sex so they can make healthy decisions and protect themselves.
- Without accurate information in the classroom, students rely on unreliable Internet sources and dangerous myths.

- Inclusive sex education is crucial—inadequate sex education, on the other hand, forces LGBTQ+ students to look elsewhere for information and trusted resources and leaves LGBTQ+ teens isolated without the tools they need to stay safe and healthy.
- An inclusive health curriculum will help increase understanding of gender and sexual diversity, improving the physical and mental health of our LGBTQ+ students.
- Finally, surveys show high satisfaction in Planned Parenthood California Central Coast’s education programs. Recent participants reported having a 95% interest in the content, 96% felt respected as a person, 98% thought materials were clear, 96% found program activities were helpful, and 89% had a chance to ask questions.

We know that for parents and caregivers, the health and safety of their child(ren) is their top priority. We also know that young people often name those adults as the biggest influence in their decisions about sex. Youth who report having positive conversations with a trusted adult about sex are more likely to delay sex, have fewer partners, and use condoms and other forms of birth control when they do have sex. It’s critical that parents and caregivers stay involved in these conversations and reinforce messages at home while conveying their values about sex and sexuality. If they so desire, parents and caregivers who are uncomfortable with a comprehensive sex education curriculum have the right to opt their students out.

Oxnard teens deserve access to the tools they need to stay healthy and safe. That means age-appropriate, medically accurate information about sex, reproduction, relationships, and preventing pregnancy and infections. Approving the MOU between OUHSD & PPCCC will support Oxnard high school students in making the responsible decisions necessary to build a healthy future and support their teachers in complying with the requirements of the CHYA.

Sincerely,

